BLIGH ISLAND MARINE PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

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Approved by:

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Date: March 7/03

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BLIGH ISLAND MARINE PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role
The **primary** role of Bligh Island Marine Park is to provide a marine recreational destination in a wilderness setting. The park encompasses the southern portion of Bligh Island (the largest island in Nootka Sound), and several other significant islands in the Spanish Pilot Group. It is a popular boating, kayaking, fishing and cultural appreciation destination, offering sheltered anchorages within deep bays in the lee of numerous forested islands. Wilderness camping is restricted to a limited number of beach camping sites on Bligh Island and the Spanish Pilot Group, and no facilities exist except for a pit toilet and primitive campsites located at Charlie's Beach on Bligh Island.

Bligh Island Marine Park is one of a series of protected areas on the coast with anchorages in a natural setting. As such, it is a stopping point for those people who are exploring Nootka Sound or the west side of Vancouver Island by boat. Together with Santa-Boca Park, the park provides an opportunity to enjoy the Nootka Sound experience, which compares to Barclay, Clayoquot and Kyuquot sounds as an attractive recreational destination.

Secondary Role
The **secondary** role is to protect and preserve significant cultural heritage features. Nootka Sound has a colourful history with First Nations heritage and European exploration and settlement. The park is rich in First Nations archaeological sites as native people have occupied Nootka Sound for at least 4,000 years, enjoying the bountiful natural resources during the summer months.

The park is also significant for the beginning of British Columbia's post-contact history. In 1778, Captain James Cook first took his ships into a small cove on Bligh Island (named after his captain) after a storm for repairs. While anchored in the cove (which he named Resolution Cove after his flagship), he made formal contact with natives in the village at Yuquot or Friendly Cove. The area subsequently became a major centre for international fur trading and today Yuquot is a National Historic Site. A plaque commemorating Cook's contact can be found in Resolution Cove. Such features add to the park's importance culturally and recreationally. Visitors can capture glimpses of the past and gain an understanding and appreciation of First Nation history and culture.

Tertiary Role
The **tertiary** role is to protect the natural values associated with the temperate rainforest and marine ecosystems on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Bligh Island Marine Park contributes 3% to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection, which is under protected at 5.4%. It also contributes 0.8% to the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection (WIM) and 1.8% to the Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) vh1 biogeoclimatic variant, which are both well represented in the protected areas system.

Relative to other outstanding nearby areas recommended for protection, Nootka Sound was recognised to have limited conservation benefit in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan. However, the park still contributes to the conservation of undisturbed, mature coastal forests of western hemlock, sitka spruce and western red cedar; shoreline habitats, and highly productive marine ecosystems including kelp beds. These features provide habitat for black-tail deer,

wolves, black bear, shorebirds, waterfowl, fish, shellfish, and marine mammals including the threatened sea otter.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of terrestrial and marine values	➢ Conduct an ecological inventory including marine components.
Impact of adjacent uses (commercial harvesting, log salvage), non-conforming uses (float home), invasive species, and recreation on natural values	➢ Work with DFO to ensure marine harvesting does not interfere with protection of marine species. ➢ Work with log salvage companies to achieve an understanding of park values. ➢ Work with adjacent land and tenure holders and licensees to address issues that may impact park values (i.e. logging, fish farms) ➢ Conduct BRIM at campsites/trails and monitor for overuse and impacts to cultural values. ➢ Monitor popular moorage sites and sensitivity to holding tank discharge.
Inappropriate visitor use may damage cultural sites	➢ Work with First Nations on cultural management planning to: ▪ safeguard sensitive spiritual and archaeological sites; and ▪ identify sites suitable for public presentation. ➢ Work with Heritage Canada to maintain the monument in Resolution Cove. ➢ Increase knowledge and awareness through the provision of interpretative information.
Conflict between commercial and public tourism and the role of floating lodges in park	➢ Develop a recreation plan to determine the specific number, location and types of recreation opportunities to offer in the park. ➢ Inventory all freshwater sources and clearly mark collection points within the park area.
Lack of awareness	➢ Install signage, ensure boundaries of the park are on maps and charts. ➢ Support the external delivery of information that would focus on cultural and natural values and appropriate behaviours.
Relationships with First Nations	➢ Develop good working relationships with First Nations to gain an understanding and appreciation of protected area status and park values.

Zoning

S, ecial Feature Zone – covers archaeological sites of cultural significance, an area of approximately 4% of the park. The objective of this zone is to protect and present significant natural and cultural values because of their special character, fragility and heritage values. As not to draw attention to the most sensitive features, not all sites (regardless of importance) are zoned and marked on maps as Special Features.

Natural Environment Zone – covers the rest of the park, approximately 96% of the park. This zone is to protect scenic values while providing for shore-based recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment. It reflects the relatively low use of most areas of the park and the current recreation activities that are appropriate in this zone.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	Bligh Island Marine Park makes a minimal contribution of 0.8% to the overall representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection (WIM), which is well represented at 17.4% in the protected areas system. With about 2,872 hectares of foreshore, it contributes 3.3% to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection (VIS), which is under protected provincially at 5.4%.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☒	Bligh Island Marine Park contributes 1.8% to the representation of CWHvh1, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 19.3%
Special Features	☒	Mature forest ecosystems, sea otters, 6 bald eagle nest sites
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	Provincially red-listed and nationally threatened sea otter. Potential habitat for Olympia oyster (listed as Special Concern by COSEWIC).
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☐	None known at this time

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☒	Remote marine experience
destination	☒	Part of Nootka Sound experience, safe anchorages, popular fishing and kayaking destination, marine wildlife viewing
travel corridor	☒	Part of a boating and sea kayaking route on the west coast of Vancouver Island
local recreation	☒	Sports fishing, boating
Special Opportunities	☒	Cultural interpretation, nature appreciation, commercial recreation opportunities including kayak ecotours based out of Gold River and salt water sport fishing
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	Historical significance and native culture, natural values including sea otters

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☒	Area of national historical significance – first point of formal contact in British Columbia; International fur trade of sea otters.

Special Feature	☒	Approximately 70 archaeological sites; ongoing traditional uses; arrival of Captain Cook on Bligh Island in 1778 during a storm, named Resolution Cove after his flagship and Bligh Island after the Captain. Remains of a silver fox farm on Villaverde Island.

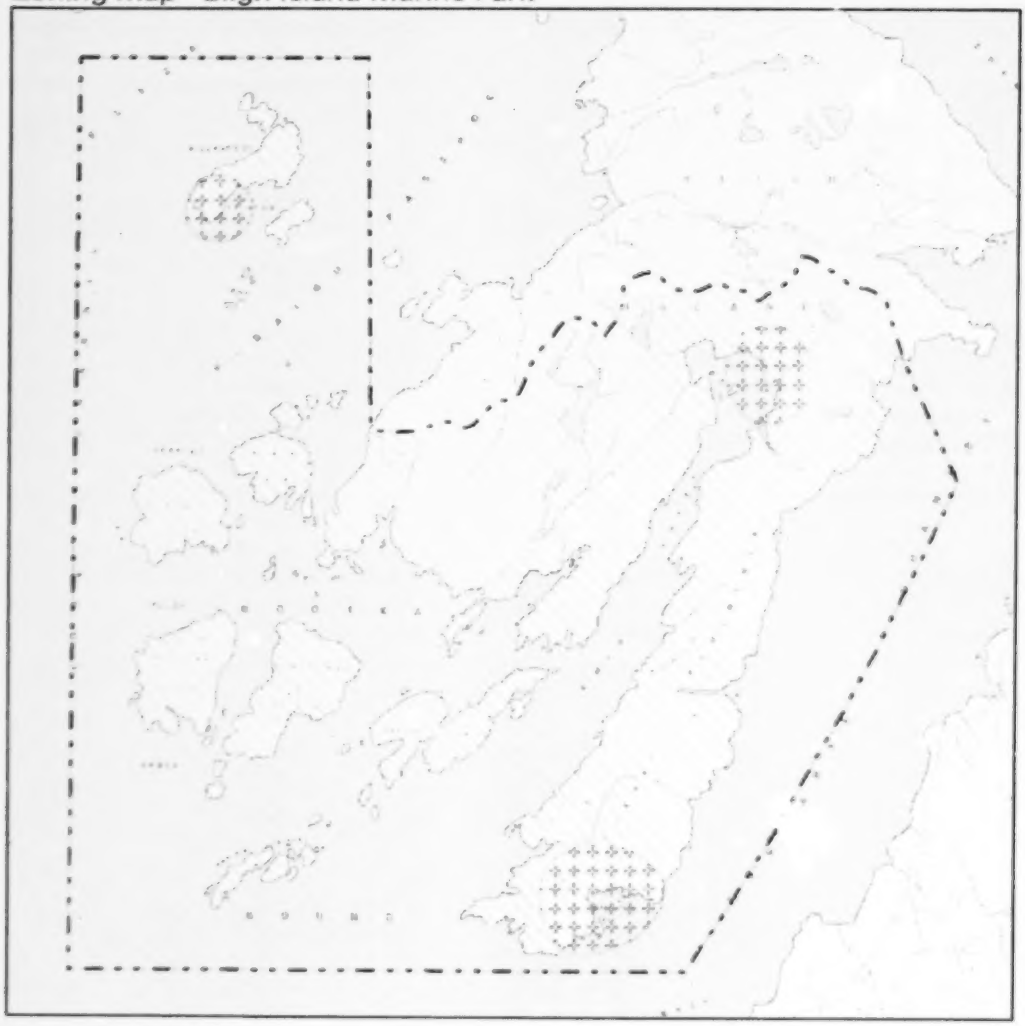
Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☐	Not Applicable
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of marine protected areas on the west coast of Vancouver Island; contributes to the Nootka Sound experience
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Not Applicable
Partnerships	☐	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	☒	The biodiversity of both the upland and the marine environment is vulnerable to oil spills, commercial harvesting, log salvaging, contamination from float homes, uncontrolled recreational use, and invasive species (green crab/varnish clam). The cultural values are vulnerable to recreation use (both level of use and location). The park is vulnerable to conflicting values between commercial and public tourism, as well as traditional first nation use and commercial harvesting.
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	Marine Protected Areas Strategy; established under recommendation of the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan

Area: 4,455.6 hectares (1,584 ha upland; 2,871.6 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

Zoning Map - Bligh Island Marine Park



Natural Environment
Special Feature
Protected Area Boundary

This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.